Right Thoughts in Sad Hours,

Repreſenting the

COMFORTS and the DUTIES

OF

Good Men under all their

AFFLICTIONS;

And Particularly,

That one, the Untimely Death of

CHILDREN:

IN A

SERMON

DELIVERED

At *Charls-town*, *New-England*; under a freſh Experience of that Calamity.

Unto the Upright there ariſeth LIGHT in Darkneſs.

Mercatura eſt Pauca amittere, ut majora Lucreris. Tertul.

LONDON,
Printed by *James Aſtwood*. 1689.

TO

My very Worthy Friend,

Mr. S. S.

Ever Honoured Sir,

THE *Ensuing Sermon, delivered in a Neighbour-Congregation, under Afflicting impressions from the* sudden Death *of an* only Child, *with a bestowal of some Correction and Enlargement since upon it; I know no fitter Person than Your self, to Present unto*; Your self, *I say, Who have had several* Infants *carried hence unto the* Father of Spirits, *in the Chariot of the same Distemper that fetched mine away.* Books *or* Thoughts *on such a Subject as that which is handled here, have been often* offered *by me unto*

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others, that were Mourners; *and being made a* Mourner *my ſelf, I thought it a fit occaſion for me, to* Write *as well as* Think *more particularly, the things that may be ſerviceable to the ſorrowful. Nor have I many Friends in this Evil World, whoſe Edification I can purſue with more* Alacrity *and* Activity, *by ſuch pains as theſe, than Yours. I have often felt the* Power, *and almoſt as often the* Sweetneſs *of that perſwaſion,* My God will never hurt me. *Unto Your ſelf, that I may recommend the entertainment of that Comfort and Cordial, under the Death of ſo many dear* Children *as you have been call'd unto the Reſignation of, is the end of my putting theſe Meditations into your Hands. I cannot without ſome Affection read* Gregory Nazianzen, *in his Funeral Oration on the Death of his Brother, giving this account of his Aged and then Living Parents;* My Father and Mother, (*ſays he*) who are both Lovers of their Children, but more Lovers of their Saviour, after they had in ſpite of all

the

the Moths, and all the Thieves, and all the Devils too in this World, laid up in a better World, a Rich Inheritance for their Children, they have now ſent one of their Sons before, to take Poſſeſſion of it. *If your Modeſty and Humility will not permit me to recite this as a* Charecter *of, let me however propound it as an* Employment *for Your ſelf, and your Virtuous Conſort. You cannot uſe too much care to ſecure unto your* Children *an* Inheritance among the Saints in Light; *and for thoſe which are departed, you may be joyfully aſſured, That they are made* partakers of that Inheritance. *What further poſſeſſion of this Waſte Wild* America, *the Lord Jeſus may take yet before the Time* of the Reſtitution of all things, *we cannot* poſitively ſay; *only we may* probably hope, *that he has a Glorious Intereſt ſhortly to be erected and maintained in theſe* utmoſt parts of the Earth. *But this I am ſure of, There are ſome* rich plots *of Ground in this Continent, which in the Approach-*

ing Day of God will yield no ſmall Sheaves *of pure* Grain *unto the Almighty* Raiſer of the Dead. *This laſt Age has produced in theſe Weſtern* Indies, *thoſe* Dormitories, *which are fill'd with precious* Duſt, *united unto the Son of* God. *Part of that Honourable* Duſt *hath proceeded from your happy Loins*; *Your deceaſed* Children *are part of the* Turf, *with which the Lord Jeſus, as it were, takes a* Livery *and* Seiſin *of this New World for himſelf. Sir, Be encouraged to go on,* abounding in the Work of the Lord; *and go on, to believe it your Felicity, That you ſhall* go to your glorifi'd Infants, *and* they ſhall not Return unto you.

With theſe Teſtimonies of Reſpect,

I am,

Sir,

Your Affectionate Friend

and Servant,

C. M.

Right Thoughts IN Sad Hours.

Gen. XLII. 36.

Me have ye bereaved of my CHILDREN; Joseph *is not, and* Simeon *is not*— *all these things are* AGAINST *me.*

THE common, but causeless *mistake* of Pious Men, *under* and *about* Afflictions, is represented in these Words; of which words the venerable *Chrysostom* in his Ancient Commentary on them, speaks truly, *They are fit words to express the Relenting Bowels of a Parent*; and yet we may without ill manners venture to add, *The words do not alto-*

gether so well become the Grace, the Faith, the Patience of a Christian.

In this Book of the *Worlds Beginning*, which contains an admirable Narrative of Transactions for above Three and twenty Hundred Years from the first Dawn of *Time*; the Revolutions which went over the Patriarch *Jacob*, are not the least spoken of by *Moses*, the Inspired Historian; and there are especially Three Travels of that renowned Man, which the *History of his Life and Death* is Elegantly woven into: The last of those Journies was of near Two hundred Miles, namely from *Canaan* unto *Goshen*, occasioned by his Son *Joseph*'s Advancement to be *Vice-Roy* of *Egypt*, and the Relief which that Honourable *Vice-Roy* had provided against the sore Famine then raging in the Countries round about.

This Chapter entertains us with a very affecting story of some accidents preparatory thereunto; a story, *How* the Ten Brethren of *Joseph*, by whose Villany he had been Spirited away into *Egypt*, made their *Humble Address* unto him for *Corn*, while his Grandure and his Policy concealed him from their knowledge: *How* by a contrivance he made one of them, *Simeon* by name, a *Prisoner*; in the mean time obliging

liging the reſt to return with another Brother of his, by name *Benjamin*, who was by them left behind as the chief ſolace of their Aged *Father*, and the only remaining Child of his deceaſed *Mother*. Old *Jacob* was made acquainted with the true ſtate of the Caſe, and in this Verſe we have his grievous Reſentment of it. In this Querimonious Lamentation of the good old Saint there are eſpecially Two things intimated:

Firſt, Here ſeems to be a *Suſpecting* of his Childrens *Wickedneſs*; his words are, *Me have ye bereaved of my Children*, Joſeph *is not*, Simeon *is not*, *and ye will take* Benjamin *away*. Methinks the ſorrow of his oppreſſed Heart ſeems thus to vent it ſelf, *q. d.*

" This is a ſtrange, and a very ſad " thing; I cannot truſt you *all* together, " but *one* or other of you, that you think " I have a particular kindneſs for, muſt " come ſhort home. I am now confirmed " in my doubts, that *you* were the *Wild-* " *beaſts*, the unnatural *Tygres* who tore " my *Joſeph* to pieces. I am not without " my *Fears*, that you are the *Jaylors*, Shall " I ſay? or the *Hangmen* who have got my " *Simeon* out of the way. And I am jea-

" lous

" lous that you have ſome ill deſign upon " my beſt Darling *Benjamin* too. Never " had any man ſuch miſhaps in his Chil- " dren, as your miſerable Father has.

Next, Here ſeems to be a *Bewailing* of his Makers *providence:* His words are, *All theſe things are againſt me.* Some render them, *All theſe things are* UPON *me*, q. d. " As for *you*, you make light of theſe mat- " ters, as if they were no concernment of " *yours*: For *my* part, I feel them, they " go very near to *me*. But our Tranſla- tion of it, ſeems more worthy of Appro- bation and Acceptation; *All theſe things are* AGAINST *me*: And then this Para- phraſe will carry the ſence of it, *q. d.*

" The things which have been my *Trou-* " *ble*, will be my *Ruine*; they are a ſort " of things which I cannot conceive any " advantage to my ſelf *conſulted* in, or " *accruing* by. When I look upon the " *dealings* of the Lord, I cannot but be " full of awful Apprehenſions that I am " utterly baniſhed from the *mercies* of the " Lord; theſe things render me an *un-* " *done Man.*

Now, remember that the happy event proved him egregiouſly *miſtaken* here; *Joſeph is not*, ſaid he; yet, *he was*, and his Father

Father had no cauſe to be ſorry that he was *what he was: Simeon is not*, ſaid he; yet *he was*, and his Father might have been ſtarved, if he had not been *where he was*. Thoſe things which he ſo fondly counted *againſt him*, were the very things that not only try'd his *Grace*, but alſo ſav'd his *Life*. Let us admit the deplored *Child* himſelf, to correct the ſad *miſtake*; he ſaid afterwards in *Gen.* 50. 20. *God meant it unto Good.*

The *Truth* which from this *Miſtake* we may raiſe for a *Doctrine* to be now inſiſted on, is therefore this:

Doctrine.

The People of God are apt very frequently, but not a little wrongfully to conclude, that the Afflictive Diſpenſations of the moſt High towards them, are very highly to their Prejudice, or but a little to their Benefit.

The *Propoſitions* that may ſerve to ſtate this Truth diſtinctly in your Thoughts, are ſuch as theſe.

Propo-

Propoſition I.

The People of God are ſure to be exerciſed with Afflictive Diſpenſations of the moſt High towards them in the World.

There is in every Generation a Remnant, a *Little little Flock* of Men, *who* are effectually called from the *Vanities* which the biggeſt part of periſhing Mankind is wofully drowned in, unto the ſervice of the Living God; *who* have choſen *God* as their *Beſt good*, and their *Laſt end*; choſen *Chriſt* as their *Lord Redeemer*, and reſolved to be *for him and not for another*. Theſe renewed Children of *Adam* are the Myſtical Children of *Iſrael*; they may with an Eye to a *Spiritual* relation, point at *Jacob*, and ſay, *A* Syrian *ready to periſh was my Father*. Now theſe muſt even in a peculiar manner expect to be like their Father *Jacob*, who in the cloſe of his days was forced to ſay, *Gen.* 47. 9. *Evil have been the days of the years of my Life*. In every *Age* and in every *Place*, we may ſee the moſt High God afflicting of a *Jacob* in his *Relations*; of them, ſome are Churliſh, others are Profane, and others are *Taken away*.

away. We may behold the Lord 'fflicting of an *Heman* in his *Mind*; th Man complains, *Lord, Why doſt thou caſt off my Soul? While I ſuffer thy Terrors, I am diſtracted.* We may behold the Lord Afflicting of a *Timothy* in his *Body*, he feels a *weak Stomack*, with *often Infirmities.* We may behold the Lord Afflicting of a *Lazarus* in his *Eſtate*, he is reduced unto *Beggery* at the Doors of a wicked Belly-God. We may behold the Lord Afflicting of an *Elijah* in his *Eſteem*, he is Libelled as a Seditions *Boutefeau*, always *Troubling* of his Country. In a word, we may ordinarily behold a *David*, a *Job*, a *Paul*, Afflicted in all, or moſt of theſe regards.

The *Chriſtian* that promiſes himſelf an Immunity from Afflictions in this Evil World, is indeed a *Chriſtian* only in the *Italian*, wicked, ſcoffing uſage of the Word, that is, *a Fool.* It is one of the Names put upon the People of God, in *Iſa.* 54. 11. *O thou Afflicted.* Nor can any particular Believer eſcape this *common Lot*: No, every one that is of *Iſrael*, muſt look to ſay with *Iſrael*, in *Pſal.* 129. 1. *Many a time have they Afflicted me from my Youth.* Indeed the People of God will at laſt arrive unto a *Quiet Haven.*

——*Sedes*

——*Sedes ubi Fata quietas*
Oſtendunt——

[Or in a better Dialect] *Where all Tears ſhall be wiped from their Eyes*: But where? But when? Truly, this *Bliß-land* is not on this ſide the Water; it is a *Land afar off*, and we ſhall not ſee it, until we put a-ſhore on the *Land flowing with Milk and Honey*, beyond the Stars: We muſt Sail through a turbid Ocean full of *horrible Tempeſt*, here, and,

—*Ut Fluctus Fluctum ſic Luctus Luctum*—

One *Wave* will follow upon another, the *laſt Wave* ſtill ſeeming the *tenth Wave*, untill we drop *Anchor* within the vail of Heaven it ſelf. When the Ancient Martyr *Ignatius* was brought to have his Fleſh torn from his Bones, and his Bones broken by the Teeth of Wild Beaſts, he uttered ſuch a ſpeech as that, *O now I begin to be a Chriſtian!* Thus our Lord hath laid down this as the A B C of Chriſtianity, in *Matth.* 16. 24. *If any man will come after me, he muſt take up his Croß, and follow me.* This is the firſt Leſſon for a Diſciple in the School of the Lord Jeſus, *Look for Afflictions here!* The Glorious God will lay

lay over our Shoulders that ragged piece of Wood, *a Croſs*; when once we are aſſociated with his people, who all Travel through the Valley of *Baca*, that is, of *Weeping*, unto their Everlaſting Happineſs. This was the condition of our Illuſtrious *Fore-runner*; he ran thrô a way all ſtrow'd with *Briars* and *Thorns*, as it is ſaid in *Luk.* 24. 46. *He muſt ſuffer, and enter into his glory*; and all his followers are to drink of his *Cup*: We cannot eſcape treading in the Bloody *Tracks* which he hath left behind him; we have received this warning from our Lord himſelf, in *Joh.* 16. 33. *In the World you ſhall have Tribulation*: We have received this Witneſs from his Apoſtles alſo, in *Act.* 14. 22. *Through much Tribulation we muſt enter into the Kingdom of God*; and the experience of above Five thouſand Years, hath now ſet a Seal to that Obſervation, in *Pſal.* 31. 19. *Many are the Troubles of the Righteous.*

Queſtion.

But from whoſe Hands do the Afflictions of the Lords people come?

This is that which we have ſaid, *They are the Diſpenſations of the moſt High.* Indeed there

there may often be the *Hand of Joab* in our Afflictions, there may be the Malice of Satan and his Inſtruments. Thoſe fierce Natives of this dark Climate will be often as *Thorns* in the ſides of the Pilgrims, that are Travelling to a *better Country*.

But ſtill theſe *Rods* are all in the Hand of God: We are told in *Amos* 3. 7. there is no ſuch *Evil in the City, and the Lord hath not done it*. O that every Man would always remember this, the *Griefs* of thy Heart are all ordered by that God by whom the *Hairs* of thy Head are all numbred. Not ſo much as the *Tongue* of a *Dog* will ever ſtir againſt thee, unleſs managed by the *Hand* of the Lord. The *King* of *Aſſyria* himſelf, by whom a vaſt part of mankind may be *Afflicted*, is but a *ſtaff* of *Indignation* in that all-diſpoſing Hand.

Propoſition II.

The people of God are apt very frequently to conclude, that the Afflictive Diſpenſations of the moſt High towards them, are very highly to their prejudice.

From the embittered Heart of a *Jacob* in his exerciſes, there is often ſob'd that melancholy

melancholy Groan, *All theſe things are againſt me.* Alas! under Affliction we can uſually ſpeak no other Language but that in *Lam.* 3. 1. *I have ſeen Affliction by the Rod of Gods wrath*; we ſee nothing but *Wrath* and *Curſe*, and fiery Vengeance diſpenſed unto us in our Bitter things.

Queſtion.

Whence do's this come to paſs?

One reaſon of this *Miſpriſion* is; The beſt people of God are not without bad *remainders of Fleſh*: Now every *Affliction* will grate hard upon *That*; the galled *Fleſh* of Afflicted Men, cannot forbear that ſhreek, *I am hurt.* This *Fleſh* of ours will cloud our underſtandings, and beget in us very *falſe Conceptions* of our *ſharp Afflictions.* The methods wherein the great God purſues our good, are very *Certain*, and very *Glorious*; but they are alſo very *Obſcure.* Silly ſhallow Creatures, who *dwell in Houſes of Clay*, cannot fathom the Myſterious proceedings of the God whoſe *Way is in the Deep*, and whoſe *Judgments are a great Deep*; and when we go to Contemplate theſe *deep things*, then our *Fleſh* offers unto us very injurious Glaſſes to view them in;

liſten to this misjudging *Fleſh*, and it will tell us, *If thou doſt not live ſurrounded with the Pleaſures, and Riches, and Honours of this World, and leave a good Portion of them unto Children of thy own; when thy time ſhall come to Dye, thou art a Miſerable Man.* The moan of *Jacob* in our Text is by ſome Engliſhed ſo, *All theſe things are Above me*: Truly, 'tis *above* the Reach, *above* the ken of our *Fleſh* to imagine, *That what impairs our Worldly greatneſs and glory, is no real Detriment unto us*; our *Senſe*, our carnal perverſe dim-ſighted *Senſe*, will not eaſily make *ſence* of that Riddle, in *Judg.* 14. 14. *Out of the Eater came forth Meat.*

Another reaſon of this *Error* is; The people of God have been guilty of much *Sin againſt God.* In the dark doleful days of their Unregeneracy, how many, how mighty, were our *doings againſt the Lord!* Yea, and ſince the Lord made us *know wiſdom in the hidden Man*; how crooked, how faulty have our ways before him been! The Pſalmiſt complained in *Pſal.* 49. 5. *In the days of Evil, the iniquity of my heels doth compaſs me about:* Our *Heels* formerly have ſtep'd awry into dirty *Iniquities*, and thoſe *Iniquities* we have been ready to lay at

at our *Heels* by our Impenitent forgetfulneſs: But in our *Afflictions* thoſe *Iniquities* riſing as it were out of their Grave, haunt us, dog us, and ſtare us full in the Face; our Hearts now *condemn* us, and thereupon they likewiſe *condemn God*: We are prone to think that *Gods deſigns* cannot be good, becauſe we know that *our deſerts* are very bad. Sinful Man will not quickly believe that word of the Lord, *My Thoughts are not as your Thoughts*: Hence our own firſt *miſgiving*, and then *misjudging* Hearts will in Affliction ſay, *Now I feel the wounds of an Enemy*: *It is not poſſible that I ſhould ſuffer theſe terrible things from one who is the God of my Salvation*; *the Lord proceeds to Afflict me thus*, *becauſe he intends to deſtroy me for ever*. When once a thinking Man comes to ſay, *God is Angry*, he will ſoon add, *I am undone*.

A Third reaſon (to ſay no more) of it, is; The *Devil of Hell* often falls upon the people of God in their Afflictions; that ſoul Fiend falls foul on them, when he has them thus at a *diſadvantage*. The *Powers of Darkneſs* take the *Hours of Darkneſs*, therein to make their Aſſaults on the Faith

of them that they would annoy. The *Accuſer of Men* to God, is alſo an *Accuſer of God* to Men; and when it is a Gloomy time without them, then will Satan ſuggeſt within them, *Terribilia de Deo*, very frightful Viſions of their Almighty Saviour; he will pour in upon them thoſe things which are call'd, in *Eph.* 6. 16. *The fiery Darts of the Wicked one:* He would have us entertain *hard* and *Helliſh thoughts* of that God, *whoſe Mercy endureth for Ever*: Hence he will be ſtill telling of us, *God counts thee for his Enemy*, and *thy God hath forgotten thee*, and *the Mercy of the Lord is clean gone from thee for ever; thou art before thy Maker as a Veſſel wherein he will have no pleaſure for evermore; he will undo thee before he has done with thee.*

Now, What is the Reſult of all this? Alas! the people of God now frequently have cauſe to give that mean, that ſhameful, that pitiful account of themſelves, in *Pſal.* 77. 2. *In the day of my trouble, my Soul refuſed to be comforted.*

Propo-

Propoſition III.

The people of God conclude not a little wrongfully, when they think his Afflictive Diſpenſations to be but a little for their benefit.

When *Jacob* would ſurmiſe, *All theſe things are againſt me*, it might have been reply'd upon him, *No, you are greatly deceived, you and yours muſt have periſhed, if theſe things had not happened.* When the Afflicted people of God cry out, *Undone! Undone!* they have cauſe to eat that word, and rather to ſay, *Periiſſem niſi periiſſem*, I had been *quite undone*, if I had not been *thus undone.* Inſtead of concluding, *All theſe things are againſt me*, we do much *wrong*, if we do not admit that *Thought*, in *Rom.* 8. 28. *All things ſhall work together for good.*

Queſtion.

How do's this Appear?

One piece of *Injuſtice* attending of that concluſion is; There is a *wrong* thereby done to the *Kindneſs* of God. With ſuch

a clap of Thunder as this may the Lord reprove your hard opinion of him, *You think worſe of me than I deſerve!* Our good God hath aſſured us, in *Rev.* 3. 19. *Whom I love, I rebuke and chaſten*; why then ſhall we contradict him with ſuch a vain imagination as this, *I am Rebuked only that I may be ruined, I am Chaſtened only becauſe I am abhorred by the Lord?*

Another *Injuſtice* expreſſed in that concluſion is; There is thereby a *wrong* done to the *Wiſdom* of God. They of Old reflected hard, when they ſaid, *Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?* Thus do they that ſay, *Can any good thing come out of Affliction?* Well, and I pray, Why not? What ſhould hinder *Good* from coming out of that *grievous thing?* Is it impoſſible unto that God, who is *wiſe in Counſel, and wonderful in Working?* We are informed in 1 *Pet.* 1. 6. It is only *if need be*, that we are brought into *Heavineſs*: The Lord would not let one *Affliction* give thee any Trouble, if ſome *Occaſion* did not call for it, if much *Advantage* did not come by it.

One more Evidence of *Unreaſonableneſs* in this concluſion is, The people of God at the Period of their *Afflictions*, will themſelves confeſs, this concluſion to have been

been *Unreaſonable.* What our Lord ſaid unto the Inquiſitive *Peter*, the ſame he ſays unto the *Afflicted* Chriſtian, *What I do, thou knoweſt not now, but thou ſhalt know hereafter:* Verily, when we do *hereafter know*, how God has at once *Afflicted* us and *Amended* us, then we ſhall ſay, *He hath done all things well.* When we have got through the *black Vallies*, out on the other ſide, then we ſhall *ſee* what now we will hardly *believe*, then we ſee that the *Thoughts* of God about us were *Thoughts of Good and not of Evil*; then we ſee that the *Aims* of God were to *do us Good in the latter end*; then do our Triumphing Souls declare as in *Pſal.* 119. 71. *It is good for me, that I have been Afflicted.* Nothing is more common than to hear a Chriſtian after many *Afflictions* profeſſing, *I could not have been well without any one of all my Afflictions, I had want of them all, I have good by them all*: How much more will the Beauty and Benefit of all our Afflictions be thankfully acknowledged by us in the Land of *light*, where every *Labyrinth* of *providence* will be explained; for every one of our *Afflictions* in this, we ſhall return a Million of *Hallelujahs* in another and a better World.

The Improvement of theſe things remains.

USE.

And now let theſe things incourage the *people of the Saints of the moſt High*, unto a due *Faith* and *Patience* under the *Afflictive Diſpenſations*, which their Heavenly Father tries them with. Chriſtians, under all your *Afflictions*, labour to ſay ſtedfaſtly, to ſay joyfully, not, *All theſe things are againſt me*, but rather, *Thanks be to God for his unſpeakable Gifts.* The Language that beſt befits us under our *Afflictions* is *that*, the frequent uſing of which gave unto a famous Jewiſh *Rabbi* the name of *Rabbi Ganizoth*; namely, *This Affliction was for my good*; *and This too, and This too.*

I am this day viſited my ſelf with the *ſudden Death of a dear and only Child*: Permit me to endeavour your Edification, for you all have been and may be under *ſome Affliction*, and moſt of you under *ſuch Affliction*; let me do it by tendering unto you ſuch *Conſiderations* as I would this day quiet my own tempeſtuous Rebellious

lious Heart withal. As our Lord Jeſus Chriſt himſelf was *Tempted* for this cauſe in part, *That he might know how to ſuccour the Tempted*; thus the frail Men whom he employes, for *this*, among other that are *worſe* cauſes, are *Afflicted*, even *That they may more feelingly ſpeak a word in ſeaſon unto others in Affliction too.*

¶ There is Firſt a *General* and then a *Special* Caſe, which the following part of my Diſcourſe muſt apply it ſelf unto.

The General Caſe.

The more *General Exhortation* to be now Urged, is;

Let us under no Affliction whatſoever, be diſcompoſed with any Apprehenſion, as if it were utterly Againſt us.

I am ſpeaking to many *Children of Jacob* that are *Children of Affliction*; ſome of us are lamenting over our broken *Eſtates*, like *Naomi*, in *Ruth* 1. 21. ſaying, *I was Full, but I am become Empty.* Some of us are Lamenting over our blaſted *Credits*, like *David*, in *Pſal.* 69. 20. ſaying, *Reproach*

proach hath broken my Heart; and there are with us those who are Weeping over their Dead *Children*, like the distressed Women of *Bethlehem*, in *Matth.* 2. 18. *Weeping for their Children, and not willing to be comforted, because they are not*: And many more such Griefs are the minds of devout Persons among us Wounded with. That which *Jacob* sigh'd over his *Joseph* and *Simeon*, is by multitudes Mourned over their other Enjoyments also. An *Ezekiel*, as in *Ezek.* 24. 16. Sighs over the *Desire* of his Eyes, *She is not!* A Widow of one of the Sons of the Prophets, as in 2 *King* 4. 1. Sighs, *My Husband is not.* An *Isaac*, as in *Gen.* 24. 67. may Sigh over his *Mother*, *She is not.* An *Israel*, as in *Gen.* 35. 29. may Sigh over his *Father*, *He is not.* And if a *Jonah* have had any *Gourd* which he has taken much contentment in, he too, as in *Jon.* 4. 8. is made to Sigh, *It is not.* But that which puts a *Sting* into all these Afflictions, is, that the Afflicted say, *All these things are against me.* Now, O that there may be laid upon the thus talking *Sorrow* a charge of *Silence*; Eternal *Silence* unto thee now, O thou inordinate *Passion*, before the Lord. Let this be as a *Word upon the Wheels*, running into the very Souls of them that are

are of an *heavy Heart*. Be entreated, O Afflicted Chriſtians, to ſay no more, *All theſe things are againſt me*. No, be Comforted; be Refreſhed with Sentiments that are quite contrary thereunto. In your moſt cloudy hours, O ſtrive to ſay with him in *Pſal.* 94. 19. *In the multitude of my Thoughts within me*, O Lord, *thy comforts delight my Soul.*

COMFORTS.

It is the advice of the Wiſe Man, in *Eccl.* 7. 14. *In the day of Adverſity conſider*: Now there are theſe comfortable things, which it is fit for you to *conſider* in this day of your *Adverſity*; let me adviſe you with ſome *Good and Comfortable Words.*

Conſider *FIRST*,

Thoſe very things which your Affliction lies in the abſence of, might for ought you can ſay, be very much unto your prejudice.

That very *Joſeph*, that very *Simeon*, that very *Benjamin*, which you are Afflicted for the want of, might do you more *Hurt* than *Good.*

Even

Even in *outward Reſpects*, you canot determine what is beſt for you: It were as much *Arrogance* in *you* to *direct* the *Providence* of God, as it was *Blaſphemy* in the well-known Prince to *Correct* the *Creation* of God, when he ſaid, *Had I been by at the Making of the World, I could have ſhown how ſome things might have been better done.* Perhaps you are Afflicted, becauſe your *Poſſeſſions* about you are diminiſhed; but have you not read in *Eccl.* 5. 13. of *Riches kept to the hurt of the Owners:* Many a Mans *Caſh* has been his *Crime*; his *Houſe* has coſt him his *Head*, by his *Land* he has forfeited his *Life*; the poor Heathen of old, *curſing* of his Enemy, wiſhed that he might be a *Rich man.* Perhaps you are Afflicted becauſe of a little Mud thrown upon your *Reputations*; but have you not read in *Prov.* 27. 14. How pernicious a thing it is to have too much *Applauſe* in the World? To be too well ſpoken of, procures that *Envy*, before which, *Who can ſtand?* The *Breath* in the Trumpet of *Fame* not rarely carries a *Plague*, and a *Bane* to them whoſe *Names* it ſounds. It may be, your *Affliction* is the loſs of *Children*; well, have you not read ſuch a Meſſage ſent to a godly Man, as that in 1 *Sam.* 2. 33. *The Son of thine,*

thine, whom I ſhall not cut off, ſhall be to conſume thine Eyes, and to grieve thine Heart. Tis poſſible, that if thy Child had liv'd, it might have made thee, *the Father of a Fool*, or (that I may ſpeak to the Sex that is moſt unable to bear this Trial) *the Mother of a Shame.* It is a very ordinary thing for *one Living Child* to occaſion more trouble than *ſeven Dead ones.*

However, in *Spiritual Regards*, you may be exceedingly harmed by the *ſecular Delights* which you deſire; you may have cauſe to *Rue* what you *Wiſh*, becauſe it may prove an *Idol* which will render your Souls like the *Barren Heath in the Wilderneſs before the Lord.* We do very Childiſhly often cry for a *Knife* that would cut the Fingers of our own Souls; we pant after thoſe things which may be to our Souls as bad as *drink* to the Thirſty craving Man in a Dropſie. It was the very direful calamity of the ancient *Iſraelites*, in *Pſal.* 105. 15. *The Lord gave them their Requeſts, but ſent leanneſs into their Soul.* A *Lean* Soul, a *Wretched* Soul, a Soul *pining away in its iniquities*, is oftentimes the effect of thoſe fine things which we Dote upon. It is a blaſted banned *Soul* that ſets up a Creature in the Room, the Throne of the great God,

God, that gives unto a Creature thoſe *Loves* and thoſe *Cares* which are due unto the great God alone: Such *Idolatry* the *Soul* is too frequently by *Proſperity* ſeduc'd unto. We are told in *Prov.* 1. 32. *The proſperity of Fools deſtroys them*; many a *Fool* is thus *deſtroy'd!* O fearful caſe! A full Table, and a *lean Soul!* A big Title, and a *lean Soul!* A numerous Poſterity, and a *Soul* e'n like the *Kine* in *Pharaohs* Dream! *Madneſs* is in our Hearts if we tremble not at this, *Soul-calamities* are *ſore Calamities.*

Conſider *NEXT*,

The benefit which the Lord intends you by your Afflictions, is really very great and glorious.

The *ſweet Influences* which your *Afflictions* are like to have upon you, who can enough deſcribe? If you loſe a *Joſeph*, or a *Simeon*, or a *Benjamin*, behold theſe are *Spiritual Bleſſings in Heavenly things*, with which God will abundantly make up your loſs. That very rule which the Lord has given us about the Nurture of *our Children*, He obſerves in the Diſcipline of *his own*; we are under our Heavenly *Fathers* executions of

of that *Rule*, even then when the Death of *our Children* is the Affliction under which we labour, *Prov.* 23. 14. *Thou ſhalt beat thy Child with the Rod, and ſhalt deliver his Soul from Hell.* In this World you are like to be much the *Wiſer* and much the *Better* for your Afflictions, and much the more *Bleſſed* for them in the other World for evermore. What? And are theſe things *againſt* you? God forbid you ſhould imagine ſo.

I. *Thoſe things which you conclude to be againſt you, are the things, by which the moſt High deſigns to promote your* KNOWLEDGE.

It is affirmed in *Pſal.* 94. 12. That thoſe *Whom God chaſtens, he alſo teaches out of his Law.* The Almighty is now but putting of you to *School*, and [*Schola Crucis eſt Schola Lucis*;] you are in a *School* where the Lord will have you to learn many very notable and ſurprizing Leſſons: God will have *Afflictions* to be the *Clay* and *Spittle* that ſhall open thoſe Eyes which *Sin* hath blinded; horrible *Cataracts* have ſeized thoſe Eyes, which are by theſe means removed; the Phyſician recites to you the names of ſome *Bitter Herbs*, which the Eye-ſight is relieved by. We are indeed all of us a ſort

of

of Creatures which can ſee beſt in the *Dark*; it was the Aphoriſm of *Solomon* the Wiſe, in *Prov.* 29. 15. *The Rod and Correction give Wiſdom.* It uſually comes to paſs that *Correction* and *Inſtruction* go together. You ſhall find that ΠΑΘΗΜΑΤΑ are ΜΑΘΗΜΑΤΑ, that *Quæ Nocent Docent*, that *Maturant Aſpera Mentem*, and that *Vexatio dat Intellectum*; or as the Proverb of the Ancients hath it, *In Adverſity Men find Eyes.* You ſhall now *know* more; but hear of What:

§. The Lord reſolves to make you *know* more, *Firſt* of HIMSELF: We have been miſerably deficient in the *knowledge of God*, (we may ſay of our ſelves, as *Paul* of ſome) we may *ſpeak it unto our ſhame*; Our *Ignorance* of God hath been the cauſe of ours *Sins*;

Heu! Prima hæc ſcelerum cauſa eſt mortalibus (ægris
Naturam neſcire Dei——

And our *Knowledge* of God will be the effect of our *Sorrows* for them: The Lord is carrying of you into the Clifts of a cragged Rock, and it is to make the *Glory* of his Attributes paſs before you. When *Job* had gone through his *weary Months*, he

he then ſaid unto the Lord, as in *Job.* 42. 5. *Now mine Eye ſees thee!* It is by *Affliction* that we are brought to ſee the *Soveraignty* of God, and to lie before him as *Clay in the Hand of the Potter*; to ſee the *Righteouſneſs* of God, and to own that he *puniſheth us far leſs than our iniquities deſerve*; to ſee the *Holineſs* of God, and to Reverence him as one that is of *purer Eyes than to behold Evil*; to ſee the *Power* of God, and to think, that *nothing is too hard for the Lord*; to ſee the *Goodneſs* of God, and to find him a *rewarder of them that diligently ſeek* him; in a word, a little more *Affliction* will bring thee to ſay, *Lord, I know thy Name, and I will put my Truſt in thee.*

§. The Lord reſolves to make you *know* more, *Secondly*, of his SON: What are all thoſe *Afflictions* that make you groan? Truly, they are a few *Chips* and *Splinters* of a Redeemers *Croſs*: They are, as 'tis ſaid, in *Col.* 1. 24. *That which is behind of the Afflictions of Chriſt*; ſome *Vinegar* and *Gall* was left by him for us to *pledge* him by taſting of: God will thereby make you ſenſible a little of the *Agonies* and *Anguiſhes* that made him to Roar, when there were *Laid on him the Iniquities of us all.* We were never yet enough affected with the *Kindneſs* of our Lord Jeſus in the dark

doleful day, when he *endured the Croſs, deſpiſing the Shame* which was due unto us all. Art thou *Poor?* God will have thee call to mind the *Poverty* which thy Redeemer underwent for thy ſake, the *Poverty* which when our Lord *Inventoried* his Eſtate, rendred the *Sum Total* of it only this, *The Son of Man hath not where to lay his Head.* Art thou *Pained?* God will have thee mindful of the *ſtrong Pains* which thy Redeemer felt, when his *Fleſh* was torn from his Bones, when from Head to Foot bloody Wounds and Stripes and Stabs were to be ſeen upon him. Art thou *Fearful?* God will have thee bear in mind, the horrible Conſternation which cauſed thy Redeemer to Sweat clots of *Blood*, tho' in a cold Night he were groveling on the cold Ground. Art thou *Diſgraced?* God will have thee mindful of the Ignominy caſt upon thy Saviour, when he was uſed as a *Traytor*, as all that was Vile, and when the baſeſt fellow in the City was counted a better Man than he. Do thy *Friends* deal unworthily? Thou ſhalt then learn what the Exerciſe of thy Redeemer was, when even thoſe of his own Family, *all forſook him and fled:* theſe things *Affliction* will make us *Thoughtful* of, and *Thankful* for: And as the *Kindneſs* of a *Jeſus*, ſo the *Value* of a

Jeſus,

Jeſus, comes to be duly rated by ſuch means as theſe. The *Afflicted* man is driven to call every *Creature*, *A lying Vanity*, and from hence he comes to call a *Chriſt*, *The Pearl of great Price*: It hath been ſaid, *Unto you that are Believers he is Precious*; we may add, *He is Precious to you that are Afflicted* alſo. The Afflicted man finds that *Gold* it ſelf will do him no good; whereupon a Saviour becomes more deſirable than whole Mountains of *Ophirs Gold* unto him.

§. The Lord reſolves to make you *know* more, *Thirdly*, Of his WORD. There is a Glorious *Letter* which the God of Heaven, hath ſent from the Third Heaven unto the Children of Men. Fooliſh man often throws it by like *Waſt-paper*, until Affliction puts him upon the due, the diligent ſtudy of it. *David* that had a *leſſer Bible* than we, could ſay in *Pſal.* 119. 23. *Princes did ſit and ſpeak againſt me*; but what was the iſſue of the *Affliction* which the Calumny and Obloquy of his Perſecutors gave unto him? It follows, *Thy Servant did Meditate on thy Statutes.* Bad weather in the World makes Afflicted men to keep their Eyes much upon the *Light ſhining in a Dark place* unto them. To Meditate on a fit portion of the Bible, dwelling on every Verſe, till at leaſt one *Obſervation* and one

Supplication be drawn from it; hath not ſeldomer been the *Eaſe*, than it hath been the *Work* of Afflicted Men: And God will hereby help you, as to a better *Reliſh* of, ſo to a fuller *Comment* on theſe Miraculous Lines than once you had: The bitter Tang of *Afflictions* will bring you to a better Taſte of that Book, whereof the Pſalmiſt could ſay, *How ſweet are thy words unto my Taſte!* A *Leaf* of the Bible appears (as to *Luther*) not to be parted withall for *all this whole World*; chiefly unto thoſe whom *Affliction* hath convinced of the *Vanity* and *Vexation* here. But this is not all; the beſt Expoſitors of not a few *Aſſertions* in the Bible are ſome ſore *Afflictions* in the World. The *Stars* and the *Scriptures* are ſeen beſt in a Froſty Night. The *Myſteries* of a *Well-ordered Covenant*, the *Mæanders* of a *Deceitful Heart*, the worth and uſe of *Great and Precious promiſes*, you will beſt underſtand in your Afflicted Hours. *Adverſity* makes a Verſe of *Scripture* to be not like a Verſe of *Ovid*, as it often is to them that *are not in Trouble as other men.*

§. The Lord reſolves to make you *know* more, *Fourthly*, of YOUR SELVES. The Golden Rule, *Know thy ſelf*, is that which our God will have us Learn, while we *feel his Rod.* *A Wound* will convince an Emperour

Emperour that he is *a Man.* It was ſaid unto *Iſrael* in *Deut.* 8. 2. The Lord *Humbled* them, that *what was in their Hearts* might be *known*: God will have us to ſee our own *Follies* and be *Aſhamed.* God will have us to ſee our own *Graces* and be *Refreſhed*; and in the *Furnace* of Affliction we muſt undergo a *Fiery Tryal* in order thereunto. *Scilicet ut Fulvum ſpectatur in Ignibus Aurum*—— Under *Affliction*, as God will bring you to ſay of your ſelves, *I have perverted that which is Right*, ſo he will find occaſion for you to hear him ſaying to you, *Now I know that thou feareſt me.*

§. But where ſhall I ſtop? About the advancements of *Sight* procured by *Affliction*, I may ſay as about the Inſtances of *Faith*, it is ſaid by the Apoſtle, *The time would fail me to mention them*: Yet let me briefly add; By the *Afflictions* whereof you complain, God will bring you to *Know* what SIN is. You that formerly counted *Stollen Waters are Sweet*, ſhall now ſee *Sin* in a truer uglier dreſs; you ſhall ſee that it is as in *Jer.* 44. 4. *The abominable thing, which I hate, ſaith the Lord.* God will alſo bring you to *Know* what RELIGION is: You that ſometimes have ſaid, *It is in vain to ſerve the Lord*, ſhall now be reduced unto better Sentiments; you will ſoon be-

lieve that in *Pſal.* 111. 10. *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wiſdom.* Finally, God will bring you to *Know* what all *Sublunary things* are. You have had your too *high Thoughts* in your *good Times*; then your Song was, *My Mountain is made ſtrong.* God will now ſhow you what *Creatures* are, and give you cauſe to ſay of them, *They are all Phyſicians of no value*, and *They are broken Ciſterns that can hold no Water.* Well then; ſay not, *All theſe things are againſt me*: It is a matchleſs Priviledge to be thus *Taught of God.* We are told in *Eccl.* 1. 18. *He that increaſeth Knowledge, increaſeth Sorrow*: Behold, we may *Invert* the Words, and not *Injure* the Truth, *Increaſe of Sorrow brings increaſe of Knowledge with it.*

II. *Thoſe things which you conclude to be againſt you, are the things by which the moſt High deſigns to promote your* VERTUE *alſo.*

The intereſt of *Holineſs* will be marvellouſly befriended in your Souls and Lives, by the influence of *Affliction*; we are told in *Heb.* 12. 10. *That God chaſtens us*, to make us *partakers of his Holineſs*; that *Holineſs* which he does *like*, and which is *like* to himſelf: Theſe Three will the *Holy* Effects of your *Affliction* be.

§. Your

§. Your *Afflictions* will, *Firſt*, Help your *Diſorders*. Your Souls are depraved with, or expoſed to dangerous deadly *Diſorders* and *Diſtempers:* By *Afflictions* your Heavenly Father will *Prevent* them; by *Afflictions* he will *Redreſs* them. What are you *Afflicted* for? See a ſhort and a ſweet account given of this *Phyſick*, in *Iſa.* 27.9. *By this the iniquity of* Jacob *ſhall be purged, and all the Fruit ſhall be to take away his Sin.* The *firſt ways* of *David* were his *beſt ways.* Why ſo? Truly, it was becauſe the *firſt days* of *David* were his *worſt days*: He doth himſelf aſſign this reaſon of it, *Pſal.* 119.67. *Before I was Afflicted I went aſtray, but now I have kept thy word.* Uſually men *Sin* leaſt when they *Suffer* moſt. God will have *thy ways* too to be *good ways*; they ſhall therefore be *ways Hedg'd with Thorns*, that thy Soul may not ſtep awry: Thy *way* muſt be incommoded by *Thorns*, that it may not be over-run with *Weeds.* There are great *Sins* which thy wild *Luſts* would hurry thee on unto; there is a *Madneſs* in thy *Heart* that would produce all manner of *Miſchief* in thy *Life*, if reſtraint be not laid upon it; now the Iron *Chains* of *Affliction* are clapt upon thee to keep thee from thy Exorbitancies. What is ſaid concerning the good Subjects of the Anci-

ent *Typical*, *Antiochal* Perſecution, in *Dan.* 11. 35. is to be ſaid concerning the good Subjects of any Affliction whatſoever, *They are Purged and made White thereby.* This more generally; but more particularly, I would add:

§. *Again*, Your *Afflictions* will wean your *Affections* from the wrong Objects of them. God will have you to look upon all things here below with ſuch *Affections* as *David* had for a *Kingdom* in an *Exile*, and to ſay, *I am as a weaned Child.* To this end the Lord by *Afflictions* layes *Wormwood* on the Breaſts which you have hung too much upon. He will cauſe Creatures to be our *Grief* that they may not be our *God.* *Tertullian* ſaid very true of *Idolatry*, It is *præcipuum crimen Humani generis*, the *grand Crime* of Mankind: *Affliction* mortifies that *Rebellion*; therefore, *David*, are thy *Children* cut off; therefore, *Jacob*, is the Wife of thy Boſom ſnatched out of it; therefore, *Hezekiah*, is thy *Treaſure* blaſted and waſted: It is that *Idolatrous Affections* may be recalled.

§. Once more; both your *Graces* and your *Duties* will be quickened by your *Afflictions*. *Afflictions* will prove the *Weights* by the Hanging whereof upon you, you ſhall more flouriſh like *Palm-trees* in the *Court-*

Court-yards of the Lord: *Afflictions* will be the *Feet* which by treading upon you, will make you as the *Chamomil*, to grow the more. *Afflictions* will be the *Fires*, which like *Viols*, you ſhall make the better Muſick by being diſpoſed near unto: *Afflictions* will be the *Spurs* which ſhall cauſe you to mend your pace in *Running the Race which is ſet before you. Afflictions*—— But room for enlargement is denyed—— In ſhort; God by *Afflictions* is as it were pounding or grinding of his rare Spices in your Souls, the ſcent of them will now become very Fragrant, very Glorious. We have heard in *Eccl.* 7. 3. *By the ſadneſs of the Countenance, the Heart is made better:* God will make that *Heart* of thine very Serious, very Circumſpect, very Spiritual, and very Heavenly by the *Afflictions* which thou art prone to quarrel at.

O then ſay not, *All theſe things are againſt me*; the price of theſe things is *above Rubies.* Well ſaith the ſentence of the Ancient, *O ſervum illum Beatum, cujus emendationi Deus inſtat, & cui dignatur (ſic) Iraſci.*

III. *The moſt High deſigns likewiſe by the Afflictions to promote your* HEAVEN *for evermore.*

The Speech of the Apoſtle to this purpoſe is very Emphatical, 2 *Cor.* 4. 17.

Our

Our light Affliction here, which is but for a Moment, works for us a far more Exceeding and Eternal weight of Glory. O ſurprizing connexion! *Light Afflictions* work a *Weight of Glory*! *Afflictions for a Moment* work a *Glory Eternal*; and this *Glory* ſhall be a *far more Exceeding Glory*; or, as the Original intimates, a *Glory* which no *Hyperbole* upon *Hyperbole* can give a too *Glorious* Character of! Your *Afflictions* do *prepare* you for, tho' they do not *purchaſe* for you, the *Glories* of the World to come. The Hebrew word for *Glory* ſignifies the ſame that your own ſenſe of *Affliction* feels, *a Weighty thing*. Well, from the one *Weight* you ſhall paſs to the other. Your Crown of *Thorns* will ſhortly be turned into a Crown of *Glory*; a *Weighty*, a *Maſſy*, a never-fading *Crown*. A Roman Emperour once rewarded one that wore an *Iron Chain* in a Priſon for his ſake, with a *Golden Chain* as heavy in a Preferment afterward: Such, and more than ſuch at laſt will be thy Felicity. Art thou *Afflicted?* Be aſſured, ——*Dolor hic tibi proderit olim.* After thy *Sowing* time in *Tears*, thou ſhalt have a *Reaping* time in *Joy*; after thy *Bread of Adverſity*, thou ſhalt come to Eat of the *Tree of Life in the midſt of the Paradiſe of God*; after thy *Water of Affliction*, thou ſhalt

ſhalt come to Drink of *the River of Pleaſures at Gods right Hand for evermore.* Let me ſay to thee as the Martyr to his Friend, *Thy Affliction will ſcour and rub thee bright, that thou mayſt be fit to be ſet upon an high Shelf in Heaven for ever*: or, let me ſay to thee as the Martyr to himſelf, *Hold out Faith and Patience, Heaven will quickly make amends for all.* Thou ſhalt have the more of *Heaven* for all thy paſt *Heavineſs*; thou ſhalt e're long be received into the place of *Reſt*, and there all thy former Difficulties will but ſweeten the *Times of Refreſhing* which now come *from the Preſence of the Lord.*

Say now, O Believer, Are all theſe things *Againſt* thee? O what things can be for thy Good, if theſe are not ſo? Sit down then, and whatever thy *Afflictions* are, let theſe words of the Lord Jeſus allay thy *Storms.* Do not now practically ſay, *Theſe Conſolations of God are ſmall:* Behold, thou art furniſhed with *ſtrong Conſolations.*

Counſels.

But that you may be able to apply theſe *Conſolations* unto good purpoſe, under Affliction there are ſome *Counſels* to be ſet before you. In ſo many *Scriptures* you ſhall there-

therefore have ſo many *Counſels*; they will be both beſt *Received* and beſt *Remembred* if they come unto you with a, *Thus ſaith the Lord.*

The Firſt *Counſel* proper for you, is intimated in

Eph. 1. 3. *Bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who hath bleſſed us with all Spiritual bleſſings in Heavenly matters in Chriſt.*

Count *Spiritual Bleſſings* the moſt *Deſirable Bleſſings.* A *ſufferer* ſhould be a *Solomon*; under *Affliction* be of his temper who in 2 *Chron.* 1. 5. counted *Wiſdom* preferrable to *Riches* and *Honours* and *Life* it ſelf. Count an *Acquaintance* with God, that thing by which *Good will come* unto you; then you will not count *Afflictions* from God, the thing which is *Againſt* you. On one ſide, be ſure to judge ſo, *If I loſe in Temporals and get in Spirituals, I am an abundant Gainer.* Be ſure to judge ſo on the other ſide, *If I loſe in Spirituals and get in Temporals, it certainly fares very Ill with me.* Souls, let SIN be the only thing of which you will abſolutely ſay, *It is Againſt me*: But of every thing which makes you more conformed unto Jeſus Chriſt, ſay,

This

This is for me: O ſay, *This is all my Salvation, and all my Deſire.*

The Second *Counſel* pertaining to you, is expreſſed in

Jam. 5. 13. *Is any among you Afflicted? Let him Pray.*

A time of *Affliction* ſhould be a time of *Supplication.* It was the *Precept* of a good God, in *Pſal.* 50. 15. *Call upon me in the day of Trouble*: And it was the *Purpoſe* of a good Man, in *Pſal.* 86. 7. Lord, *In the day of my Trouble, I will call upon thee.* Has any remarkable *Affliction* befallen thee? I would ſeriouſly ask, *Was not the Spirit of Prayer abated in thee before that Affliction came?* Let me then a little alter the words of *Deborah*, and ſay, *Awake, awake, O Soul, awake, awake, and utter a Prayer.* The *Title* of the Hundred and ſecond Pſalm ſhowes the *Duty* of all Afflicted men; there ſhould be, *A Prayer made by the Afflicted when he is overwhelmed, and he ſhould pour out his complaint before the Lord.* It was a very wiſe propoſal of *Eliphaz*, in *Job* 5. 6, 8. *Affliction comes not forth of the Duſt, nor doth Trouble ſpring out of the Ground*: It may be thou haſt loſt a deſirable piece of *Duſt*, it may be one of thy Delights is put into the *Ground*:

Ground: O look up, look above *Chance*, look beyond all *ſecond Cauſes*: 'tis added, *I would ſeek unto God*; the moſt adviſable thing in the World! We are in *Affliction* prone to make ſad complaints unto our Fellow-worms; unto them we ſay, *O my Dead Infant!* or, *O my Loſt Eſtate!* But *Job* found cauſe to ſay, in *ch.* 21. 4. *Is my complaint to Man? If it were ſo, Why ſhould not my Spirit be Troubled?* Then let us not keep ſaying, *Have pity on me, O ye my Friends*: But inſtead thereof let us be ſaying, *The Lord be Merciful unto me a Sinner!* Do's not thy *Affliction* put thee upon more *Prayer* than thou didſt uſe before? It is a ſad ſign that the *Sower Cup* arrives unto thee, ſpiced with the dreadful Vengeance of God upon thy Soul. An *Affliction* will neither *come* in Mercy, nor *go* in Mercy, if much *Prayer* do not accompany it. In Affliction, *Pray much*. As ſoon as ever any *Affliction* befalls us, the *Firſt thing* we do, ſhould be to fall down upon our knees, to cry mightily unto the Lord that his *Grace* may be *Sufficient* for us. And ſtill, as long as Gods hand is Lying in *Tryals* upon us, our hand ſhould be lifted in *Prayers* unto God. We ſhould *Pray* that our *Affliction* may be Moderated, that our *Affliction* may be Sanctified, that our *Affliction* may

may be Removed. The Pious *Hannah* of old found *Prayer* to be an *Heart-eaſe*. Let this be your good Character, your good Carriage, *Lord, in Trouble have they viſited thee, and poured out a Prayer when thy Chaſtening was upon them.*

The Third *Counſel* which you are to follow, is declared in

Job 34. 31. *Surely, it is meet to be ſaid unto God, I have born Chaſtiſement, I will not offend any more.*

Repentance of Sin ſhould be the effect of *Affliction* on Men. The *End* of every *Affliction* in Sum, is the ſame that the *End* of every *Mercy* is; we may ſay of it, as in *Rom.* 2. 4. *O man, it leads thee to Repentance.* God ſpoke by his *Ten Judgments* unto *Egypt*, as well as by his *Ten Commandments* unto *Iſrael.* Every *Affliction* cries this in our Ears, *O Repent, Reform, Return to him that Smites thee.* We read of a gracious perſon, who upon having a *Child* taken away by Death, ſaid in 1 *King.* 17. 18. *My ſins are brought unto Remembrance.* This is that which perhaps all thy *Sickneſs*, all thy *Reproach*, all thy *Poverty*, and all thy *Bereavments* are ſent upon; God would have thee to *remember* ſome *Sin* with Grief and Shame, and

and *Wherein thou haſt done Iniquity, to do it no more.* It was a black brand ſet upon a bad Man, in 2 *Chron.* 28. 22. *In the time of his Diſtreſs, did he Treſpaſs yet more againſt the Lord.* Shall God *Prune* thee and Cut thee, and no *good Fruit* be found upon thee after all? Shall God *Prick* thee and Lance thee, and all thy *bad Blood* be ſtill running in thy Veins? Then indeed, theſe things are *Againſt* thee. *Jeroboam*'s withered *Hand* was *Againſt* him, becauſe it rectify'd not his naughty *Heart.* There hardly ever was a more lamentable ſight in this World, than, *A Thief on a Croſs continuing to diſhonour the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* Art thou *Afflicted?* Then take the courſe which the Church propounded in *Lam.* 3. 40. *Let us ſearch and try our ways.* O now, Firſt *Petition* thy God; *Lord, ſhew me wherefore thou contendeſt with me!* And then *Examine* thy ſelf, *Wherein have I tranſgreſſed and exceeded?* Endeavour to find out what *Controverſie* there may be between God and Thee; let thy impartial *Conſcience*, the Preacher in thy Boſom, inform thee, *Whether* thou haſt not *Overvalued*, or *Undervalued* the things which thy *Affliction* is in the privation of; *Whether* thou haſt not injuriouſly procured unto ſome other perſon, an *Affliction* like that which thou

thou thy ſelf now Smarteſt under; or *Whether* no *Circumſtance* of thy *Affliction*, as the *Time* of it, the *Place* of it, do loudly proclaim Gods quarrel in it. *Enquire* thus, and immediately comply with what the Lord ſhall *Require*. Let thy *Dead Friends* cauſe thee to Repent of thy *Dead works*; thou Mourneſt over a *loſt Child*, or a *loſt Name*; O be concerned about a *loſt Soul* that is lodging in thee. Ask thy ſelf, *What have my paſt Behaviours been?* And ask, *What ſhould my future Deportment be? Bewail* now, and *Amend* all thy miſcarriages in the ſight of God. We are very ready to fall out with *Creatures* when any thing happens amiſs unto us: But O ſpend all thy *Paſſion* and all thy Indignation here. Thou mayſt look upon thy *Sins*, and Curſe them as the Authors of all thy *Sorrows*. O look upon *Sin* and ſay, *Have I found thee, O mine Enemy*; Man, loath now, and leave every *Sin*. 'Twas that *Sin* that kill'd thy *Child*; 'Twas that *Sin* that burnt thy *Houſe*, that ſunk thy *Ship*, that robb'd thee of thy *Delights*: Never after this be at peace with that miſchievous Monſter, *Sin*.

The Fourth *Counſel*, big with which every *Affliction* ſaith unto us, as *Eliud* unto *Eglon*, *I have a Meſſage to thee from God*; we have ſpecify'd in

Job. 13. 15. *Tho' he ſlay me, yet will I truſt in him.*

An Holy *Reſolution* for God is to be maintained under every *Affliction* from God. *Afflictions* will not be *Againſt* us, if we Reſolve under them to be ſtill *For* him from whom they come. To lay aſide no *Devotions* for all *Afflictions*, to ſerve a *Smiting* God as well as a *Smiling* God, to ſeek a God that is *Frowning* on us, as well as a God that is *Owning* of us, this will argue, *An Iſraelite indeed.* We ſhould after all our *Afflictions* be ſtill able to make that *Appeal* unto the Lord, in *Pſal.*44. 17, 18. *All this is come upon us, yet have we not forgotten thee*, O Lord. Reſolve never to Renounce the *Truths* of God, Reſolve never to Deſert the *Ways* of God, whatever your *Afflictions* are; ſtill, *With full purpoſe of Heart cleave unto the Lord.* In *Reſolutions* for God, O be like an *Iron Pillar*, and a *Braſen Wall*, that cannot be prevailed againſt.

Reſolve

Reſolve to be Holy tho' the *Wrath* of *Man* would moleſt you for it. Suppoſe a wicked World ſhould Abuſe you and Oppreſs you, yet ſay with *Joſhua*, *I and my Houſe will ſerve the Lord.* Continue *Sacrificing* to, and *Pleaſing* of your God, tho' *Cains* bloody Club ſhould be Cudgelling of you.

Reſolve to be Holy, tho' the *Hand* of *God* ſhould diſtreſs you in it. When you feel the Diſcouragements of the *Narrow way*, ſtill ſay with *Paul*, *None of theſe things move me.* Suppoſe God ſhould inflict the ſtroke of his Diſpleaſure on your *outward Man*, ſtill ſay, *Tho' my* Life *ſhould be continually worn away with pining Sickneſs, yet to me to* Live *it ſhall be Chriſt.* Still ſay, *Tho' my* Name *ſhould in the Reproach of the Drunkard have Cart-loads of Mud thrown upon it, yet will I labour all I can to honour the* Name *of God.* Still ſay, *Tho' I am Reduced to be among the* Poor *in this World, yet will I ſtudy to be* Rich *in Good Works.* And ſtill ſay, *Tho' I cannot have my* Children *like Olive-plants about my Table, yet will I endeavour to be my ſelf a Dutiful* Child *of God, and as a Fruitful Olive-tree in the Courts of the Lord.* Once more; Suppoſe God ſhould withdraw the light of his Countenance from your *inward Man*; ſtill

ſay, *The Lord ſhall be* my God, my God, *even when he* forſaketh *me.* Still ſay, *I will* fear *the Lord and obey his Voice, tho I walk in* Darkneſs, *and ſhall ſee no Light.* Happy is the *Afflicted* Man, that is a thus *Reſolved* Man. The followers of theſe *Counſels* may boldly and ſafely lay claim to all the *Comforts* which have this day been ſet before the *Heirs of Conſolation.*

The ſpecial Caſe.

But there is a more *ſpecial Exhortation* to be preſſed, which may give a Period unto this Diſcourſe.

Let not the loſs of Children particularly, as a thing Againſt us, cauſe in us any irregular Diſcompoſures.

The *loſs of Children*, did I ſay? Nay, let me recal ſo harſh a Word; the *Catachreſis* is a little too hard for the Language of a Chriſtian. The Children which we count *Loſt*, are not *ſo.* The *Death* of our Children is not the *Loſs* of our Children; when all the *Loſſes* of *Job* were made up with *Doublings*, yet the Number of his Children need not be *doubled*, in the Reſtoration.

ſtoration. Our Children are not *Loſt*, but *given back*, they are not *Loſt*, but *ſent before*. In ſuch a Dialect have the Sager Heathen ſometimes talked of this Affliction; and ſhall the profeſſors of Chriſtianity, with bitter Groans enter this among their *Loſſes*, *My Children are Dead!* O tell it not at *Athens*, publiſh it not at *Rome*; leſt the Heathen Philoſophers hiſs at our weakneſs, at our Folly!

Well, this is the Calamity which many of you at ſome time or other have experience of; *The Death of Children*, this is a thing which the *Children* of *Jacob* ſeldome eſcape a reſemblance of their *Father* in. Many carry themſelves under the tryal, as if, *A Death of Vertue*, yea as if, *A Death of Reaſon*, had therewithal befallen them; but recollect your ſelves, O dejected Chriſtians, and be not like them that *Mourn without Hope* this day. Let *Bereaved* Parents be yet *Believing* Parents; the Voice of the *great God that formed all things* is unto them that in *Jer.* 31. 16. *Refrain thy Voice from Weeping, and thine Eyes from Tears, for thy Work ſhall be Rewarded, ſaith the Lord.*

Let the Thoughts which have been this day tendered unto our Improvement, glo-

riouſly compoſe and ſettle our Royled minds under this Affliction. Let us not ſay, *This thing is Againſt us*; but let us ſay, *The Lord that hath given hath alſo taken away, bleſſed be the name of the Lord.* It is indeed very true, That this Affliction is none of the moſt eaſie to be born; the Heart of a *Parent* will have peculiar Paſſions working in it, and racking of it, at ſuch a time as this. Thô there be *greater Sorrows* than thoſe with which we follow a *Child* unto the Grave; I bleſs God, it is a more bitter thing to ſay, *My Sin is mighty*, or to ſay, *My Soul is guilty*, than it is to ſay, *My Child is Dead*; that moan, *I have pierced my Saviour*, is more Heart-wounding than to *Mourn as one mourneth for a Firſt-born.* Yet few outward Earthly Anguiſhes are equal unto theſe. The *Dying of a Child* is like the *Tearing off a Limb*, unto us. But, O remember, That if ever we had any Grace in our Souls, we have e're this willingly pluck'd out a *Right Eye*, and cut off a *Right Hand*, for the ſake of God. Why ſhould we not then at the Call of God readily part with a *Limb*, and leave Him room to ſay, *Now I know that thou feareſt me, becauſe thou haſt not withheld thy Child when I called for it!* It was

from

from God that we did *Receive* thoſe *dear Pledges* our *Children*, and it is *to* God that we *Return* them. We cannot quarrel with our God, if about thoſe *Loans* he ſay unto us, *Give them up, you have had them long enough!* We knew *what they were*, when firſt we took them into our Arms: We knew that they were *Potſherds*, that they were *Mortals*, that the *Worms* which uſually do *kill* them, or at leaſt will *eat* them, are but their *Names-ſakes*, and that a *Dead Child* is a ſight no more ſurprizing than a *broken Pitcher*, or a *blaſted Flower*.

But we did not, we do not know, *What they might be*, in caſe they were continued among the Living on the Earth. We cannot tell whether our *Sons* would prove as *Plants grown up in their Youth*, and our *Daughters* as *Corner-ſtones poliſhed after the ſimilitude of a Palace*; or, whether our *Sons* might not, like *Iſaac*'s Son, do thoſe things that would be a *grief of Mind* unto us, and our *Daughters* like *Jephta*'s Daughter, *be of them that Trouble us*. Chriſtians, let us be content that our wiſe and good God ſhould Carve our Portion for us; he will appoint us none but a *goodly Heritage*. Our *Temptation* is no more than

what is *common to Men*, yea, and to *good Men*. The biggeſt part of thoſe *Humane Spirits* that are now beholding the Face of God in Glory, are ſuch as dwelt in the *Children* of Pious people, departed in their Infancy. And what have we to ſay, why we ſhould not undergo it as well as they! Was the *Infant* whoſe Deceaſe we do deplore, one that was very *Pretty*, one that had pretty *Features*, pretty *Speeches*, pretty *Actions?* Well, at the *Reſurrection of the Juſt* we ſhall ſee the dear Lambs again; the Lord Jeſus will deal with our *dead Children* as the Prophets *Elijah* and *Eliſha* did by thoſe whom they *Raiſed* of Old; he will bring them to us, recovered from the pale Jaws of Death; and how *Amiable*, how *Beautiful*, how *Comely* they will then be, no Tongue is able to expreſs, or Heart conceive. Tho' their *Beauty do Conſume in the Grave*, yet it ſhall be *Reſtored*, it ſhall be *Advanced*, when they ſhall put off their *Bed-cloths* in the *Morning* of the day of God. Again, Was the *Infant* now lamented, very *ſuddenly* ſnatch'd away? and perhaps *Awfully* too! not meerly by a *Convulſion*, but by *Scalding*, by *Burning*, by *Drowning*, by *Shooting*, by *Stabbing*, or by ſome unuſual Harm? Truly, it is often

ſo,

ſo, that the *quicker* the Death, the *better*. It is more deſirable for our Children to feel but a few *Minutes* of Pain, than it is for them to lye Groaning in thoſe exquiſite Agonies which would cauſe us even *our ſelves* to wiſh that the Lord would take them out of their Miſery. As for any more grievous and ſignal circumſtance attending of our *Dying Children*, our beſt courſe will be to have it ſaid of us, *They ceaſed, ſaying, The Will of the Lord be done!* As the *Love* or *Wrath* of God is not certainly declared in, ſo, our *Grief* before him ſhould not be too much augmented by ſuch things as theſe. And it is a favour, if ſo much as one of our *Children* be left alive unto us. Let not the ſenſe of *one Trouble* ſwallow up the ſenſe of a *Thouſand Mercies*. The Mother from whom a *violent Death* has taken one of her two Children, may immediately Embrace the other and ſay, *Bleſſed be God that has left me this!* But once more, Is the gone *Infant* an *only Child?* Are we now ready to ſigh, *All is gone!* Nay, Thou haſt but a poor *All*, if this were *All*. I hope, thy *only Child* is not thy *only Joy*. If thou haſt ever paſſed through the New Birth, the ſenſe of thy Soul is, *One Jeſus*

is

is worth Ten Children; *yea*, *One Chriſt is worth Ten Worlds.* What tho' all thy Candles are put out! The *Sun*, the *Sun of Righteouſneſs* is ariſing to thy Soul for ever. An undone Man art thou indeed! that haſt thy little Glaſs of Water ſpil'd or ſpoil'd, while thou haſt a *Fountain*, a Living Fountain running by thy Door! The bleſſed God calls thee, *My Child*; and that is infinitely better than, *A Name of Sons and of Daughters.*

Finally, Have we any Doubts about the *Eternal Salvation* of the Children which we *have Buried out of our ſight?* Indeed, as to *grown Children*, there is often too ſad cauſe of ſuſpicion or ſolicitude; and yet here, the *Soveraign diſpoſals* of God muſt be ſubmitted unto. Beſides, Thô it may be, *we* could not ſee ſuch plain *Marks* and *Signs* of Grace in our *Adult Children* as we could have wiſhed for, nevertheleſs *they* might have *the Root of the matter* in them. There are many Serious, Gracious, Well-inclined young People, who conceal from every body, the Evidences of their *Repentance*, the Inſtances of their *Devotion.* You cannot tell what the Lord did for the *Souls* of your poor Children before he took them

them out of the World. Perhaps they *ſought*, they *found* Mercy, *between the Stirrup and the Ground.* The Child of a Godly Parent, is not to be deſpaired of, thô *turned off the Gallows.*

But as to *young Children*, the Fear of God will take away all matter of Scruple in the Owners of them. *Parents*, Can you not ſincerely ſay, That you have given, as *your ſelves*, ſo *your Children*, unto God in a *Covenant never to be forgotten?* Can you not ſincerely ſay, That you have choſen God in Chriſt for the *Beſt Portion*, as of *your ſelves*, ſo of your *Children?* Anſwer to this: If your *Children* had been ſpar'd unto you, would it not have been your care to have brought them up in the *Nurture and Admonition of the Lord*? Would you not have uſed all Prayers and Pains to have engaged them unto the Service of the *Living God*, and unto a juſt prejudice againſt all the vile Idols and vain courſes of the World? Then, be of good cheer: Your *Children* are in a better *place*, a better *ſtate*, than you your ſelves are yet arriv'd unto. The Faithful God had promiſed, *I will be their God, as well as thy God.* O ſay, *This is all my Deſire,*

thô

thô the Lord ſuffer not my Houſe to grow. Thoſe dear *Children* are gone from your kind Arms into the ſweet Boſom of Jeſus, and this is, *by far the beſt of all. To have Children this Day in Heaven!* Truly this is an Honour which neither you nor I are worthy of. But ſo it is; The *King* of *Kings* hath ſent for our Children to conferr a *Kingdom* on them. They are gone from a dark Vale of *Sin* and *Shame*; they are gone into the Land of *Light* and *Life* and *Love*; there they are with the *ſpirits of Juſt men made perfect*; there they *ſerve the Lord Day and Night in His Temple*, having *all Tears wiped from their Eyes*; and from thence methinks, I hear them crying aloud unto us, *As well as you love us, we would not be with you again; weep not for us, but for your ſelves; and count not your ſelves at Home till you come to be, as We, for ever with the Lord.*

I have done. The fit *Epitaph* of a Dead Infant, *That*, That alone is enough to be the *Solace* of a Sad Parent,

Of ſuch is the Kingdom of Heaven.

FINIS.

Extract of a Letter.

Weſtfield, 14th. 6 M. 1686.

"I Am ſorry to hear that God hath "laid you under that Exerciſe you "ſpake of in your firſt Letter, in the "Death of Children. But if Heatheniſh "Men could take their little Babes and "burn them in the red Fire, in Love "and Honour to their Idol-God, the "Devil; how ſhould we who have Hope "in God, bluſh at the leaſt Heart-ri-"ſings againſt ſuch Determinations as "are made by his all-diſpoſing Provi-"dence, whereby he picks and chooſes "what Flowers pleaſe him beſt. We "have nothing too ſweet for Him.

"I ſometimes have been refreſh'd in "like Caſes by ſuch Thoughts as theſe: "*Viz.*

I pauſing on't, this ſweet refreſh'd my thought,
Chriſt would in Glory have a Flower ſweet, prime,
And having Choice, choſe this my branch forth brought:
Lord tak't: I thank Thee, Thou tak'ſt ought of mine.

It

It is my Pledge in Glory: Part of me
Is glorifi'd in it, now, Lord, with Thee.

Grief or'e would flow, and Nature fault would find
Were not thy Will my Spell, Charm, Joy and Gem;
That as I ſaid, I ſay, Take Lord, they're thine:
I piece-meal paſs to Glory doe in them.
I joy, may I ſweet flowers for Glory breed;
Whether Thou gett'ſt them freſh, or lett'ſt them ſeed.

E. T.

Edward Taylor.